

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAA-01 IO-13 ACDA-12 OMB-01
SSM-03 /090 W
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O P 080956Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8611
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR, LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3813

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, MILI, ASEC, LE, CASC
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION: JULY 8, 1200 LOCAL

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. THE UNEASY CEASE-FIRE REMAINS IN EFFECT.
PRESIDENT SARKIS IS STILL THREATENING TO RESIGN. THE LEBANESE
FRONT SAYS SARKIS SHOULD NOT CONSIDER RESIGNING UNTIL MAKING
A TRIP ABROAD TO APPEAL FOR HELP. CAMILLE CHAMOUN AFFIRMS
THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE WITH THE SYRIANS, BUT SHAFIQ
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WAZZAN DEFENDED THEM. END SUMMARY.

2. CEASE-FIRE GENERALLY HOLDING.

THE UNEASY CEASE-FIRE REMAINS GENERALLY IN EFFECT ALTHOUGH
THERE WERE SCATTERED SMALL ARMS FIRE AND OCCASIONAL EXPLO-
SIONS DURING THE NIGHT OF JULY 7/8. IN ADDITION, SNIPERS

(WHETHER SYRIAN, CHRISTIAN OR BOTH IS UNCLEAR) IN THE EAST BEIRUT AREA HAVE DEPT TRAFFIC BETWEEN THE TWO PARTS OF THE CITY AT AL-MOST ZERO. NEVERTHELESS, MANY CIVILIANS FROM EAST BEIRUT WERE ABLE TO LEAVE THE CITY TO THE MOUNTAINS TO THE NORTH DURING THE COURSE OF THE DAY.

3. SARKIS STILL THREATENING TO RESIGN.

(A) AFTER MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT THE AFTERNOON OF JULY 7, PRIME MINISTER SALIM AL-HOSS SAID, "THERE IS STILL NOTHING NEW WITH REGARD TO THE RESIGNATION; THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC CONTINUES TO INSIST ON RESIGNING HIS FUNCTIONS." ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT LE JOUR, SARKIS REPEATED TO HIS VISITORS ON JULY 7 THAT HE FOUND HIMSELF AT AN IMPASSE AND THAT HIS PRESENCE AS CHIEF OF STATE WAS USELESS AT THE MOMENT. HE ADDED THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED ON THE LOCAL, ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS NOT TO RESIGN BUT THAT HE WOULD NOT GO BACK ON HIS DECISION UNLESS HE WERE GIVEN GUARANTEES ALLOWING HIM TO UNDERTAKE ACTIONS CAPABLE OF SAVING LEBANON.

(B) ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT LE JOUR, THE PRESIDENT WAS CONSIDERING THE FOLLOWING PLAN:

--STOPPING THE CAMPAIGNS LAUNCHED BY VARIOUS PARTIES AGAINST EACH OTHER;

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--OPENING OF A DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND POLITICAL COMMANDERS IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH AN OVERALL SECURITY PLAN FOR THE COUNTRY.

--DISARMAMENT OF THE PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE IN LEBANON;

--DISARMAMENT OF THE MILITIAS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES IN BOTH EAST AND WEST BEIRUT.

(C) THE PAPER ALSO SAID THAT THE PRESIDENT BELIEVED THAT FIRST OF ALL HE MUST ARRIVE AT A CONSENSUS ON REBUILDING THE ARMY, WHICH HE CONSIDERED TO BE THE KEY PROBLEM AND WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIM TO MOVE TOWARDS CARRYING OUT THE POINTS CITED ABOVE.

(D) PARLIAMENTARY DEFENSE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOUAD LAHOUD TOLD DATT EARLY JULY 8 THAT KAMEL ASSAD AND PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN WOULD MEET WITH SARKIS JULY 8. LAHOUD SAID SARKIS STILL INTENDED TO RESIGN, BUT THAT MEETING WOULD DEAL WITH POSSIBLE STEPS TO SOLVE CRISIS. LAHOUD HIMSELF HAS SEVERAL SUGGESTIONS, INCLUDING EXPANSION OF THE PRESENT CABINET, DEALING IN DIRECT MANNER WITH QUESTION OF ARMY

OFFICERS AND AGREEMENT THAT ADF SHOULD REMAIN IN LEBANON.
ADF SHOULD BE POSTED IN ALL PARTS OF LEBANON (EXCEPT BELOW
RED LINE), BUT ADF ROADBLOCKS/CHECKPOINTS SHOULD BE ELIMINATED.
LEBANESE INTERNAL SECURITY FORCES SHOULD TAKE OVER SECURITY
DUTIES, AND SARKIS SHOULD ESTABLISH A SENIOR HEADQUARTERS
STAFF TO CONTROL SYRIAN BRIGADES. LEBANESE ARMY SHOULD BE
PUT IN TRAINING MODE IN PREPARATION FOR TAKING OVER SECURITY
RESPONSIBILITY FROM ADF.

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4. LEBANESE FRONT DECLARATION.

AS ALMOST ALL POLITICAL LEADERS CONTINUE TO ASK THAT THE
PRESIDENT NOT RESIGN, THE LEBANESE FRONT ON JULY 7 ISSUED
A SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCAL COMMUNIQUE WHICH STATED THE FOLLOWING:

(A) "IT WOULD BE ERRONEOUS TO BELIEVE THAT PRESIDENT SARKIS DECIDED TO RESIGN IN ORDER TO PROCLAIM HIS REJECTION OF THE SYRIAN DEMANDS BROUGHT BACK FROM DAMASCUS BY FOREIGN
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MINISTER BOUTROS. IN EFFECT, THESE LATEST CONDITONS, WHATEVER THEY ARE, DID NOT REQUIRE A RESIGNATION FOR THEY ARE NO WORSE THAN THOSE WHICH EXISTED ALREADY."

(B) THE ESSENTIAL SYRIAN DEMAND IS "THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE INTO A SYRIAN COMBAT FORCE."

(C) "GIVEN THIS, THE RESIGNATION OF PRESIDENT SARKIS IS MOTIVATED BY HIS REJECTION OF A TRANSFORMATION WHICH IMPLIES THAT HE REFUSES A FICTITIOUS COMMAND OF THIS FORCE TO THE POINT OF REFUSING THE MAINTENANCE OF THIS FORCE ON LEBANESE TERRITORY. . . (AND BY) HIS REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE NON-CESSATION OF THE BLIND BOMBARDMENTS WHICH CONTINUE TO BE AIMED AT EAST BEIRUT AND THE SOUTHERN SUBURBS."

(D) "IN THE CASE, THEREFORE, WHERE THE AGREEMENTS THAT MUST BE MADE ARE NOT CARRIED OUT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE FOR PRESIDENT SARKIS IMMEDIATELY TO MAKE A TRIP TO THE CAPITALS OF THE SIX STATES TO WHICH THE LEBANESE FRONT HAS ADDRESSED AN APPEAL (THE U.S., SOVIET UNION, FRANCE, GREAT BRITAIN, WEST GERMANY AND THE VATICAN). . . IT WOULD ALSO BE DESIRABLE THAT ON HIS WAY BACK TO LEBANON PRESIDENT SARKIS STOP AT THE UN IN NEW YORK TO INFORM THIS ORGANIZATION OF HIS DEMARCHES."

(E) "UPON HIS RETURN THE CHIEF OF STATE WOULD INFORM THE LEBANESE PEOPLE OF THE INITIATIVES HE HAS TAKEN IN THEIR NAME AND WOULD THEN RESIGN IF AT THIS MOMENT THE PEOPLE ACCEPTED TO SEE HIM RESIGN."

5. CHAMOUN AND GEMAYEL ISSUE STATEMENTS.

(A) IN A DECLARATION TO REUTERS ON JULY 7, NLP LEADER CAMILLE CHAMOUN SAID: "I FORESEE NO POLITICAL SOLUTION,
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THERE CAN BE NO COMPROMISE. THE SYRIANS MUST LEAVE. WE ARE NOT DISPOSED TO MAKE WAR EVERY THREE MONTHS."

(B) MEANWHILE PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL AFTER SEEING PRESIDENT SARKIS MADE ASOMEWHAT MORE CONCILIATORY STATEMENT, SAYING: "THE IMPORTANT THING IS NOT THAT THE ARAB FORCE

WITHDRAW TODAY OR TOMORROW. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WHEN IT DOES WITHDRAW, IT WILL NOT BE ON BAD TERMS WITH LEBANON."

6. CONSERVATIVE MOSLEMS RESPOND.

SAEB SALAM TOLD THE PRESS ON JULY 7 THAT, "I CALL FOR THE DISARMAMENT OF ALL UNOFFICIAL FORCES IN ALL PARTS OF LEBANON, ESPECIALLY IN BEIRUT AND ITS SUBURBS." ISLAMIC COUNCIL PRESIDENT CHAFIC WAZZAN, WHO RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS JULY 7, WHERE HE HAD MET SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD THE SAME DAY, TOLD JOURNALISTS THE COUNCIL WOULD ISSUE A STATEMENT JULY 8. IN THE INTERVAL, HE SAID, "WHAT I CAN AFFIRM NOW IS THAT I FOUND IN SYRIAN OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY PRESIDENT ASSAD, THE SAME SENTIMENTS TOWARD ALL THE LEBANESE PEOPLE. . .WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE GOAL OF PRESERVING LEBANESE UNITY AND PROTECTING LEBANESE LEGITIMACY." PARKER

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